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D R A F T Rev. 9/23/76)

Major General Lincoln D. Faurer
Vice Director for Production
Defense Intelligence Agency
1E880 Pentagon
Washington, D.C.

Dear Linc:

Thank you for your letter of August 20th on the handling of intelligence support to the Verification Panel Working Group. My thinking, though stimulated by your comments, leads me to conclude that this is not the time to alter arrangements that were organized by and are responsive to the National Security Council Staff as currently constituted.

INR and DIA are more than able to have their views presented to the VPWG by representatives of the Departments of State and Defense; indeed, INR and DIA officials often attend VPWG meetings and speak without inhibition. In other words, I do not see that CIA's occupying the DCI's seat at VPWG meetings in any way muzzles INR or DIA.

The CIA role, rather, is to achieve coordination -- when possible. In the VPWG, the coordination process differs somewhat from that normally used in national intelligence production, a fact that may be the cause of some misunderstanding. Because

papers for the VPWG are usually requested with short deadlines from ad hoc groups or from individuals in the SALT community, as a practical matter initial drafts are seldom fully coordinated even within the author's parent organization. The intelligence sections of these papers usually are based on existing coordinated intelligence, such as National Intelligence Estimates or previous VSWG papers. Coordination of these intelligence sections occurs as the papers move into final form in the VPWG, and I can recall no instance in which differing views were not fully explored before a final paper was forwarded to the Verification Panel for discussion and eventual decision. In any case, under Executive Order 11905 the DCI is free to use whatever mechanism he chooses to provide intelligence support to the NSC. It therefore does not seem improper to me that CIA should correlate Community views at this working group level.

As for the role of the National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs, let me add this. He is the DCI's principal staff officer for this particular area of expertise, as well as a focal point for assembling and coordinating the views of the Intelligence Community. As the DCI's principal staff officer, it seems appropriate to me that the NIO/SP not participate in the Verification Panel process until the DCI himself becomes involved directly -- at the Verification Panel level.

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Turning to your examples of events that have caused DIA concern, it was the DCI's decision to have the VPWG briefed on the preliminary results of the analysis on Backfire's performance. This briefing would have been given, whether the DCI was represented by an NIO or a CIA officer. The "CIA Draft Paper on US Data on Pact Forces" was one of those papers referred to in my description of the VPWG coordination process; it was levied on a specific agency by the NSC Staff with a very short deadline. A courtesy copy was sent to DIA before VPWG consideration. In other words, the submission of this paper was standard for the coordination process of the VPWG. Only this first draft was produced, and no paper went to the VP proper. Finally, the circumstances surrounding the submission of the paper, "The Military Situation: Past, Present, and Future," were considerably more complicated than you may have been led to believe. I would be happy to discuss these circumstances with you, as well as any other concerns you may still have after receiving this letter.

In conclusion, let me thank you for your kind words about the National Intelligence Staff and for your implied confidence in the NIO/SP. In the present atmosphere, his role as Community representative is not an easy one. I hope to further strengthen the institution, in part by using it in those areas where it can make its greatest contribution.

Richard Lehman
Deputy to the DCI for National Intelligence

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